More Hazards of Moth Hunting — Mr. Hadley's item in last month's *Record* on the "Hazards of Moth Hunting" reminded me of the many brushes I have had with the police, generally friendly and often humorous. Here is one.

Bernard Kettlewell and I were collecting in the Ham Street woods. This was many years ago, before they became well known and collectors frequent. It was also before the era of m.v. lights. We pulled the car off on to one of the wide grass verges and spread a sheet in front of the headlights and over some grass tussocks to give a good reflection. We also sugared in the wood. While doing our sugaring round we heard a speeding car and police siren; then another; then a third. Not taking much notice, we completed our round and returned to the road. The three police cars were round our car. The headlights were off and the sheet was gone. At that moment the local bobby also arrived on his motor bike.

What had happened was as follows. A boy bicycling home had passed the car with its headlights blazing, and after a cursory examination, had hurried on to tell his father the following story:

"There has been a terrible car accident in the woods. The car is right off the road. There is a body in front of the car covered with a sheet. The driver has run away leaving the headlights burning." This information produced an area police alert.

We explained to the police what it was all about. They told us, with much laughter, the information they had received. Only the local bobby was annoyed "misuse of headlights, serious danger to other traffic". After all, the others had been on night patrol, but he had doubtless been dragged out of bed. — R. P. Demuth, Watercombe House, Oakridge, Stroud, Glos., 12.viii.77.

Remarkable Numbers of Moths at Light near St. Davids, Pembroke, July 1977. — Mr. J. L. Messenger and I visited Whitesands Bay, some two miles north of St. Davids, in late August 1975 with fairly good results so that we thought of paying a further visit earlier in the season. We reached this locality on 9th July, 1977 and put up in the same chalet belonging to the Whitesands Bay Hotel as on the previous occasion. The site overlooks a low cliff on the edge of the wide bay just south of St. David's Head and our m.v. trap was placed in the same position as before. The weather was calm and the wind easterly. We were amazed on this first night to find a vast concourse of insects after the lean catches we had had in Surrey. Every carton was filled to capacity and the whole catch must have weighed several pounds. By far the largest proportion of the 2,300 individuals comprising 43 species of the macros was *Agrotis exclamationis* L. (72%) and *Apamea monoglypha* L. (22%). This was to be the pattern on the eight subsequent nights with a total of 700 on the 16th when the wind changed to the west and on the last three nights the visitation was minimal. Altogether we estimated a

total of nearly 12,000 insects at the trap covering 12 nights and comprising 98 species of macros. Of the four species of Sphingids by far the most numerous was *Deilephila porcellus* L. There were quite a lot of *Arctia caja* L. and *Malacosoma neustria* L., with a fair number of both the Ermines. Among the noctuids possibly the most plentiful was *Cucullia umbratica* L. *Hadene lepida* Esp. appeared in a light brown form in some plenty with a remarkable assortment of *Ceramica pisi* L. and some fine *Agrotis trux* Hübn. Of the less frequent noctuids we saw, mostly in single specimens, were *Hadena barrettii* Doubleday, *Apamea furva* D. & S., *Cucullia asteris* D. & S., *Plusia bractea* D. & S., *P. festucae* L. and several *Leucania putrescens* Hübn. Mr. Stewart Coxey, who joined us just before we left on 20th July, said shortly afterwards he had at light a few *Plusia chryson* Esp. Geometers were distinctly scarce with a few *Scopula promutata* Guen., *Lygris mellinata* F., *L. pyraliata* D. & S., *Pseudoterpna pruinata* Hufn. and *Ortholitha plumbaria* F. — C. G. M. DE WORMS, Three Oaks, Shores Road, Horsell, Surrey.

AN UNUSUAL LOCALITY FOR MICROTHRIX SIMILELLA (ZINC.). — I have had the good fortune to record at light four specimens of this conspicuously white-banded oak-feeding Phycitid from four widely separated localities this year. Three of the records were from areas of old-established oak woodland and were: Denny Wood, New Forest, Hampshire on 18th June (B.E.N.H.S. field meeting); Hoads Wood, near Ashford, Kent on 29th June and Bisley Camp, near Woking, Surrey on 23rd July. The other record however was from Westbere marsh, near Canterbury, Kent (also on a B.E.N.H.S. field meeting) on 9th July. This is an extensive area of reed marshland bordering flooded gravel pits beside the river Stour. The main trees were various *Salix* species and the only oaks observed were saplings. — P. J. JEWESS, 378 London Road, Aylesford, Kent.

A NOTE ON BREEDING THE DEATH'S HEAD HAWKMOTH (ACHERONTIA ATROPOS L.). — With reference to Dr. Neville L. Birkett's very interesting article (in *Ent. Rec.*, **89** : 152), I would like to comment on his experience with *A. atropos* L., since I have reared well over one hundred specimens of *atropos* during my annual visits to Cape Town, with a failure rate of less than 1%.

Regarding the free-lying pupa mentioned by Dr. Birkett, and the failure of the moth from this to expand its wings, I think the reason for this was probably that it had failed to free itself of the pupa case in time. This problem can be avoided by covering free-lying pupae with about an inch thick layer of wood wool (kept moist) and the moth, whilst penetrating this, gets rid of the pupa case.

Larvae ready to pupate should be provided with damp soil, about four inches deep, in which they will construct the pupal chamber (the inside of which is about the size of a